

and the stored address and name of the purchaser being transmitted to the provider or the like.

Publication of Unexamined Patent Applications

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[TITLE OF THE INVENTION]

SYSTEM AND METHOD OF CAPTURING ENCODED DATA TRANSMITTED OVER A
COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK IN A VIDEO SYSTEM

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[0014]

The central provider 14 broadcasts a program created, sponsored or promoted illustratively by a particular commercial service provider 26. The service provider 26 is a company or an individual or group of individuals that intends to advertise a particular service or product over a network. In accordance with the present invention, telephone number data, which illustratively corresponds to a telephone number of the service provider 26, is encoded into the program. As a viewer watches the program on his/her display device 12, the telephone number data is captured by the viewer's set-top box 16. An LED indicator or a visual indicator 17 such as screen display (not shown) located on the set-top box makes an indication when telephone number data has been captured. When the viewer wishes to dial the captured telephone number, the viewer transmits an access signal to the set-top box 16. The set-top box 16 sets call to the service provider 26, illustratively by generating DTMF tones corresponding to the telephone number data. When the call is connected, the viewer can directly interact with the service provider 26.

[0018]

As described above, the telephone number data are preferably demarcated by an escape sequence that is encoded into a program when the program is recorded or transmitted. In the case of a live broadcast, the escape sequence and the telephone number data are illustratively encoded into a vertical fly-back period of at least one of video frames comprising the program. If the system transmitting the program is a digital system, the escape sequence and telephone number data are digitally encoded into a convenient portion in a digital data bitstream to be broadcast. In the case of a digital telephony protocol with out-of-band (OOB) signaling, such as ISDN, the escape sequence can be encoded into an OOB channel.

"INTERCAST USING GAP TELEVISION SIGNAL"

Nikkei Electronics, Japan, Nikkei BP Corp. (18 December 1995, No. 651, p. 106)

Broadcasting companies, cable TV companies, and satellite broadcasting companies regard the Internet as a new service and the Internet sector as easy to enter for operators compared with wide area communications services, such as telephone.

In order to have a telephone line put in, it is necessary to interconnect to an existing communication company's network, and connection fees and regulation becomes big problem.

It is only necessary to readjust the existing network, in the case of the Internet.

A typical example is the project Intercast, for realizing WWW connection services using broadcast networks, such as ground [terrestrial broadcast] waves, satellite, and cable TV.

Broadcasting companies, such as the U.S.'s NBC, took the lead, and Intercast was inaugurated in October, 1995. The service is expected to start within 1996.

Intercast will transmit HTML data by multiplexing it into the vertical blanking intervals of a television signal.

For example, in the case of a sport program, depending on the nature of the program, still pictures and video clips of the score or highlights would be sent.

This in itself is no different from teletext.

Intercast differs from teletext in its ability to access linked related information from a personal computer in the same way as one would access a conventional WWW server.

When moving to a link, an analog telephone line or ISDN is used.

While this movement is currently limited to the United States, the system is similar to teletext, and the same movement will probably spread to Japan.

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